

THE CATHOLIC

# Spirit

## A Pastoral Letter on Life Issues from Bishop Brennan

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Why have we been wearing face masks for many months and staying six feet apart? Why have we followed intensely the development and distribution of effective vaccines? Why do we abhor the violence and bloodshed in our homes, on our city streets and in the US Capitol? Have not the Coronavirus pandemic and recent violent events given our generation an opportunity to reflect seriously on the value we place on human life?

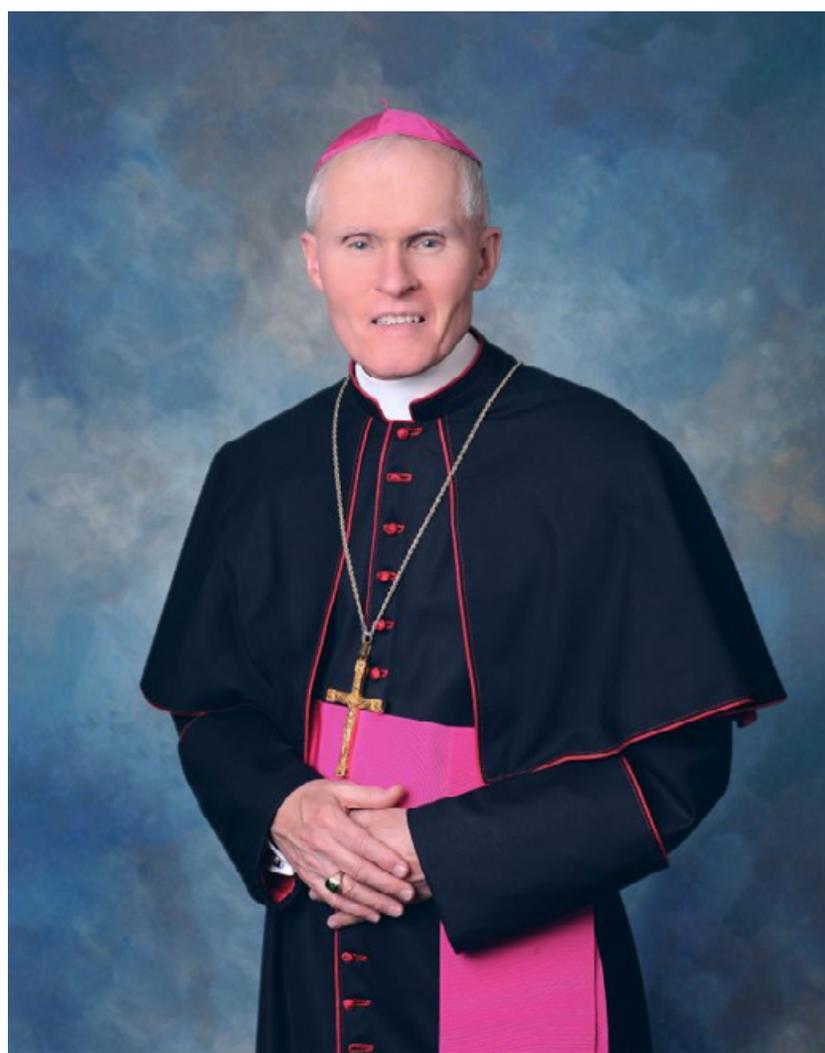
We instinctively realize that our lives and those of others matter, but it is useful to consider why. First of all, our life is pure gift. We did nothing to deserve it; we did not earn it; we could not demand it. It was simply given to us. For us who are religious, we believe this gift comes from God, who directly infuses an immortal soul in us and indirectly creates our body by means of our parents.

Secondly, as followers of Christ, we, along with Jews and many others, believe that each human being is made in the image and likeness of God. Human beings reflect God's wisdom, power and beauty not only through our ability to reason, our free will and our spiritual faculties but also by how we employ our bodies to create everything from buildings and roads to satellites and works of art. All of creation reflects the attributes of God but we human beings are the crown of God's creative work in the visible universe. The lives of such marvelous beings should be protected and given the opportunity to flourish. So, because all lives matter, we wear masks, wash our hands, wait for our turn to be vaccinated and deplore violence.

Apart from the threats posed by the Coronavirus and social violence, there are other serious threats to the lives of human beings. January each year brings the anniversary of one such threat. On January 22, 1973, I was at dinner with an American couple in Rome when we received word of the US Supreme Court's decision legalizing abortion. At that dinner was a priest, Fr. Bernard Haring, a well-known moral theologian who had served as a medic in the German army in the Second World War. All of us were appalled at the Court's decision. Fr. Haring said, "How could this happen in America? It was your country that freed the world from the barbarity of Hitler. How could America allow abortion on demand?"

Almost fifty years after that decision, our country is still deeply divided over abortion. A Pew Research Center survey, released August 29, 2019, showed that, while a majority of Americans did not want *Roe vs. Wade* overturned, only 27% thought abortion should be legal in all cases – precisely the regime now in place. There is a social consensus that *Roe vs. Wade* went too far. There is considerable room for modifying current abortion practice. Don't expect this issue to go away.

Abortion is a direct assault on the life of the unborn child, whose Author ultimately is God. Even in very difficult circumstances (I have dealt with some of them), it is always objectively a grave evil. Without judging the subjective culpability of the mother and any man or woman involved in the abortion – for many circumstances may lessen or increase their responsibility – the abortion always results in a dead baby. It is so unjust to the child. Even in the rare case of a pregnancy resulting from rape – as hard as it is for the woman to have to bear a child conceived in a violent act – one must ask: why should the child be given the death penalty for what the father did?



When I returned from Rome I went on the second March for Life in 1975 in Washington, DC, and I have been on many since then. This year I will not go, as most activities connected to the March are being done virtually. A series of virtual Holy Hours will be led by our nation's bishops, including me, on Friday, January 29, at 5:00 AM. Get up and join me! (I urge West Virginians not to travel to Washington while the pandemic rages but to take part virtually in the event and to pray for the unborn, their parents and our public officials.)

The pro-life movement has grown over the years. I was privileged to serve on the Board of Directors of a pregnancy center in Maryland for ten years, one of thousands in the country, and I am proud of the work that such centers do. They not only help women avoid an abortion but provide many kinds of material assistance, emotional support during and after the pregnancy, parenting classes, as well as post-abortion counseling for women and men who later regret their choice of an abortion. I took

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## Letter ...

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part in post-abortion counseling through Project Rachel for many years, a form of ministry begun by Catholic women.

Abortion is not the only life issue, however; there are many others. The late Cardinal Joseph Bernadin of Chicago used the image of a "seamless garment" to speak of the interconnectedness of the many life issues. I have always liked that image, taken from the tunic Jesus wore for which the soldiers cast lots, because they did not want to tear it. Issues such as poverty, racism, nativism, unequal access to good education and decent jobs, the physical environment as well as the treatment of elderly, handicapped and terminally ill persons, are all included in the fabric of the seamless garment. We should not rip out some issues from the pro-life garment and ignore or even oppose others. Rather, we should give moral support to those working on issues that surpass our own time and inclinations.

I would argue that the seamless garment has a hem. The hem keeps the garment from fraying at the edges; it keeps it together. That hem is respect for the physical life of every person. Other issues, as important as they are, are irrelevant if the person is dead. That is preeminently true for the unborn child, who has not yet had a chance to break into the world and who lacks a voice to protest attacks on his or her life. If we oppose the death penalty for those convicted of heinous crimes, so that they may have time to repent and be saved, all the more should we oppose the taking of a tiny child's life, who has committed no crime and is defenseless. A person who is mentally or physically handicapped or terminally ill also deserves our protection. Euthanasia and its cousin, assisted suicide, are not respectful of the person as such, even if that person wants to exit life now. Respect for the inherent value of the person and loving care are what each vulnerable person needs, as I have witnessed in hospices.

Before ending, I must mention two other issues that directly affect how we view other people: racism and nativism. I heard Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., speak when I was in college. He advocated for justice not just for African Americans but for all people being oppressed by powerful forces of hatred and self-interest. His doctrine of non-violence as the morally right method for promoting social and political change was thoroughly Christian and led me to take part in civil rights sit-ins and educational efforts to overcome racism. Sadly, racism still exists in our society. Change that lasts will come from people who let their minds and hearts be converted to God's way of looking at us: a beautiful mosaic in which the content of our character is far more important than the color of our skin. In society generally and in our Church, we have to recognize where racism still hurts people and take appropriate actions to eliminate it.

With respect to nativism – the social heresy that immigrants do not deserve the respect and rights that the native-born do – I have spent many years working with immigrants from around the world, especially Latin America, sub-Saharan Africa, the Philippines, Korea and Vietnam. They are every bit as good as native-born Americans and, with their youth, their customs, their skills and their willingness to do the work many native-born do not want to do, they contribute considerably to our national life. It is as wrong to despise other people because of where they come from as it is to look down on persons because of their race.

Reasonable people can differ on how our country should handle immigration, but it is appalling how long it takes to come to the United States legally: according to a Cato Institute study (Policy Analysis # 873, June 18, 2019), it took a Mexican-born sibling of a US citizen twenty years from 1998 to apply for a permanent resident visa, while persons from some other countries waited even longer. Such long delays in immigrating legally increase the pressure on some persons to come illegally when facing starvation, rampant violence or religious or political harassment at home. We need immigration reform. Meanwhile, our faith teaches us to respect and treat the stranger fairly, regardless of his or her origin.

The seamless garment of life issues was sewn by our Creator, who has given us a beautiful, bountiful world in which to live together – "our common home," as Pope Francis reminds us, where we should live in peace. God wants us to cherish one another, as He cherishes us. That is why we must engage in the struggle to preserve or restore the fundamental rights that allow human beings to live and flourish: the born and the unborn, the fully functioning and the handicapped, persons of different races and those from different countries.

The Blessed Virgin Mary, a Jewish woman, appeared as Our Lady of Guadalupe to a Mexican peasant, Juan Diego, in 1531 to show compassion to the people of our hemisphere, whom her Son had saved but who did not yet know it. Her prayers brought healing to Juan Diego's uncle, who was gravely ill, and gave hope to millions of Mexicans who put their faith in Christ. Her example of reaching out to others is a model for us as we work together on the great life issues of our day. Let us call on her often to intercede before her Son, the Lord of Life, that our efforts to respect, protect and enhance the lives of all people may bear fruit in peace and justice.

Faithfully in Christ,

*+ Mark E. Brennan*

+Mark E. Brennan  
Bishop of Wheeling-Charleston

## To Report Suspected Cases of Sexual Abuse of Children

**To Report Suspected Cases of Sexual Abuse of Children:** The Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston encourages reporting to civil authorities first and foremost if a crime has been committed. We also encourage utilizing [www.reportbishopabuse.org](http://www.reportbishopabuse.org) to make a report about any bishop in the U.S. If you have reason to believe that a bishop has engaged in sexual misconduct or has interfered with an investigation into sexual misconduct, please contact civil authorities in the applicable jurisdiction and visit [www.reportbishopabuse.org](http://www.reportbishopabuse.org).

**To Report to Civil Authorities: Contact your local law enforcement:** numbers will vary based on your location. If you believe someone is in immediate danger, call 911. To confidentially report any incidence of suspected child abuse or neglect, including sexual abuse, contact the West Virginia Bureau for Children and Families' Child Protective Services by calling the Child Abuse Hotline at 800.352.6513. You may report anonymously to this hotline if you prefer.

**To Report to Diocesan Authorities:** The diocese encourages reporting to the appropriate civil authorities first and foremost if a crime has been committed. The diocese also encourages reporting to the appropriate church authorities. To report suspected cases of sexual abuse of children by personnel of the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston to the Diocese, contact one of the following designees at 1.888.434.6237 or 304.233.0880: Mr. Bryan Minor, ext. 263; Mr. Tim Bishop, ext. 353; or Very Rev. Dennis Schuelkens, Jr., V.E., ext. 270. You may also call the Diocese's Office of Safe Environment at 304.230.1504. You may also call the Diocese's sexual abuse hotline at 833.230.5656. Complaint forms are available online at [www.dwc.org](http://www.dwc.org), click "Diocese" on the menu bar, then "Offices," then "Safe Environment," then "Download Files and Forms." The form is titled "Complaint Form for Allegations of Sexual Abuse of a Minor." The form may be returned via U.S. mail to: Office of Safe Environment, Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston, PO Box 230, Wheeling WV 26003.

**To Report to the Diocese's Victim Assistance Coordinator:** please call Dr. Patricia Bailey at 304.242.6988.

In addition to the methods listed above for reporting sexual abuse, the Diocese also has partnered with Navex Global to offer the EthicsPoint platform to report other, additional concerns, such as suspected financial, professional, and personal misconduct of a priest, deacon, religious, or lay employee of the Diocese or any Catholic parish or school in West Virginia. The EthicsPoint platform can be accessed via [www.dwc.org](http://www.dwc.org), under "Accountability," then "Report Misconduct" or by calling 844.723.8381. EthicsPoint is a third-party reporting system that reports to civil authorities where applicable and Diocesan authorities, and the identity of the person reporting is protected.

Links and information: WV Department of Health and Human Resources: <https://www.wvdhhr.org/report.asp>. West Virginia State Police, Crimes

## Sexual Abuse Awareness Training

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) requires that all Dioceses/Eparchies have in place a Safe Environment Program for the protection of children and young people. In accordance with these requirements, the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston's Safe Environment Program consists of the following components for persons seeking employment or to volunteer—directly or indirectly—with children: background check; receipt of the Diocese's Policy Relating to Sexual Abuse of Children; and sexual abuse awareness training for adults. Sexual abuse awareness training may be completed online or via live workshop. For more information on the Office of Safe Environment, please go to [www.dwc.org](http://www.dwc.org), click "Diocese", then "Offices," then "Office of Safe Environment."



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## Father Dismas Young, OFM Cap.,

Capuchin Father Dismas Young, OFM Cap., died peacefully in his sleep on Thursday morning, December 17, 2020, at Vincentian Home in McCandless, PA. A proud "Butlerite" from St. Paul Parish in Butler, PA, his baptismal name was Leo, born to parents Eugene and Mary (Steinhiser) Young on November 12, 1938. He was one of four children born to the couple and was preceded in death by his parents, his brother, Eugene, and his sister, Nancy (McKain). His sister Alice (Bernard) Carbin survives him.

Leo was familiar with the Capuchins who would come to his parish from nearby St. Fidelis in Herman, PA. After graduation from Butler High School, he felt his call to be a Capuchin brother and entered the Capuchin Brothers Training Center in Cumberland, MD. When he decided that perhaps a call to the Capuchin priesthood might best suit his talents, he enrolled at St. Fidelis College and Seminary in Herman, PA, in 1958, where he would join classmates who were a bit younger than he: John Getsy, Joseph Mindling, Emil Fischer (+2001) and William Wiethorn (+2014). They were all invested as Capuchins after their novitiate year in Annapolis, MD, where Leo was given the name Dismas. He wore his name proudly and never returned to his baptismal name as others did when permitted to do so in 1968. Besides, his patron was the "good thief" whose faith on the cross near Jesus allowed him to accompany Jesus to paradise. The class professed their first vows on July 14, 1961.

Since Dismas was the senior of the class, its oldest member, he was the official class "ambassador" or "mediator" to the superior, be it the Director of Clerics in Herman, the Novice Director in Annapolis or the Director of Student friars in Washington, DC. He used his charm and humble submission to convince any superior that the class needed to have a celebration day, a trip into the city or an exemption from certain rigors of Capuchin penance. Legend has it that he became particularly adept at melting the ice with an otherwise stern superior like brother Stephen Rowe (+1996) in Washington.

Completing graduate theological studies at our Capuchin College in Washington, DC, Dismas was ordained to the priesthood on October 22, 1966, and assigned to ministry in the Vice Province of Puerto Rico, where he worked happily for eight years in Rio Piedras and Utuado before returning to the mainland in 1975. He struggled a bit to find his niche after returning to the mainland, serving variously in Pittsburgh, PA; and Hays, KS. He was associate at Sacred Heart Co-Cathedral in Charleston from June 18, 1976 – June 15, 1977. He served at Herman, PA, before landing in Rochester, PA, in



1978. His nine years as parochial vicar to St. Cecilia Parish allowed time for bonds of friendship to mature and for his "character" to become widely known. The Parish Gift Shop at St. Cecilia, affectionately nicknamed "DizMart" by the friars, became the stuff of legend both for its surprising-if-modest profitability and its novel marketing strategies.

Without a doubt, Dismas was a "character." "Eccentric" may be too exaggerated, but applies in that Dismas' center was always outside himself. He reached out to show kindness, to entertain, to raise funds for the Province and to create community through common projects. On his class' jubilee of Ordination in 2016, a Provincial questionnaire asked the jubilarians "What would you like to have remembered about you?" Dismas replied with two simple words: "Kind." "Hospitable."

Dismas was, without fail, a much-needed source of comic relief. His smile betrayed both warmth and mischief, and his deadpan sense of humor and dry wit provoked laughter, smiles and even "Oh, Dismas!" from the friars' mouths. Throughout his days Father Dismas remained an appreciated advocate of men in Capuchin formation, from college students to friars preparing for final vows. There is no doubt that the depth of Dismas' Capuchin heart was most manifested in his fourteen years serving as pastor of Saint Mary Parish in Export, PA.

Beyond becoming a beloved pastor, his ability to welcome and care for his brother friars of particular need earned the support and gratitude of several Provincial Ministers. His compassionate and enterprising spirit was also recognized in the Export community where he was chosen Citizen of the Year for his contributions to the local community in 1990. A number of senior friars requested to live out their final years in Export where Dismas' tolerance of demanding personalities or his ability to tame any moments of temper came in handy. He had a sauna installed for a friar whose painful arthritis was only soothed by its warm waters. He had a house trailer brought to the property to accommodate a pastoral minister – and served as an entertainment center for visiting friars and friends.

When asked by the Province to take on pastoral duties at St. Anthony Parish in Charleston in 2002, Dismas generously accepted his return there even though it meant leaving his beloved community in Export. He served at St. Anthony Parish until 2007, when health issues began to limit his movement. He remained in West Virginia, residing at Paul VI Pastoral Center in Wheeling to support the fraternal life of the friars on staff there as well as those at the adjoining St. Joseph of Leonissa Hermitage. He

**See "Young" on Page 4**

## Sister Christine Riley, CSJ

Sister Christine Riley, with two CSJ sisters at her bedside and her birth sister, Kathy, on FaceTime, died at Wheeling Hospital on January 13, 2021 following a three-week illness. Sr. Christine (Mary Alice) was born in Weston, West Virginia on December 7, 1936. She was preceded in death by her father Lawrence Burke Riley, her mother Alice Edwards Riley and her older brother, Lawrence Burke Riley, Jr. Her sister, Katherine (Kathy) Riley, lives in Weston.

Sister Christine had a long association with the Sisters of St. Joseph. Her three aunts (Angelica, Bernadine, and Thomasina Riley) were members of the congregation, and she was taught by the Sisters of St. Joseph for 12 years at St. Patrick's School in Weston. After attending one year at the College of Mount St. Joseph in Cincinnati, Ohio, she entered the Sisters of St. Joseph of Wheeling on September 8, 1955. Christine embraced the mission of the sisters fully throughout her life.

After entering religious life, Sister Christine continued a nursing career and graduated from Wheeling Hospital School of Nursing, received a bachelor of science degree in nursing at The Catholic University in Washington, D.C., and was conferred a master of arts degree in nursing administration from Columbia University in New York City.

For 16 years, she worked at Wheeling Hospital as a pediatric nurse and nursing service administrator. "The children taught me about delight, simplicity, spontaneity, and how to live in a contemplative stance of being present to the moment," she said. Later, Sr. Christine was certified as a Catholic chaplain.

In 1987, she felt God's call to companion others on their spiritual journeys. In 1989, she completed the graduate program in Christian spiritual guidance at Shalem Institute in Washington, D.C., and continued to offer spiritual direction throughout her life. "I stand in awe and wonder at the varied ways God speaks to and through us," she said.

Her journey as a Sister of St. Joseph led her into elected leadership in her congregation where she served several terms on the council followed by 15 years of full-time congregational ministry as vice president and president of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Wheeling.

Sister Christine's ministry took an unexpected twist when she felt God's surprising Spirit drawing her into a more holistic approach to health and healing as a massage therapist. She was employed as a licensed massage therapist at the Howard Long Wellness Center in Wheeling for 13 years and offered therapeutic massage at various retreat centers.

Sister Christine lived the mission of loving unity as a member of the board of directors for several Catholic hospitals and civic organizations in the State, including ABLE Families and



The Gabriel Project W.VA. She served as a member of the board of directors for the SSJ Health and Wellness Foundation.

Sister Christine was known to be that special kind of person with whom one could trust the most profound conversations. She was a deep and non-

judgmental listener. Her huge heart welcomed everyone.

Christine felt comfortable and at home anywhere and everywhere. For the past 15+ years she embraced living in the 15th street neighborhood of Wheeling and enjoyed sharing the fruits of her backyard garden (especially green tomatoes for frying) with her neighbors!

Christine delighted in Creation, and especially relished summer trips to the ocean, which she made with numerous sisters, family and friends.

Christine loved music and could often be heard humming in the halls wherever she went. She was a part of the Singing Sisters in her early days as a Sister of St. Joseph, and both toured with them and was a part of the album they created. She joyfully attended concerts in the park and at the waterfront in Wheeling. She offered her gifts in music ministry at Mount St. Joseph. At the end of her life, she went to meet her Lord with the strains of "Ava Maria" and "Gentle Woman" playing in the background.

Christine loved events, especially galas and anything that drew in friends of the sisters of St. Joseph. She particularly loved being one of the hostesses at the Spaghetti Dinner every November. We will never forget seeing her, arm around one person and the other hand warmly resting on another, laughing, welcoming and sharing stories with all who visited the Mount that day!

Christine loved to laugh. She was a joyful person who loved a good story and would often linger at the table after dinner, sharing stories with whomever was present. Christine helped us all to take ourselves less seriously and to generously forgive ourselves and others. Laughing with her lightened our hearts and helped us to grow in appreciation of ourselves and others, and the delightful way life, sooner or later, worked itself out.

Sister Christine's friends knew her to be a healing presence. Whether connections were made with her in her capacities as a spiritual director, a massage therapist, or as a friend, her words and touch always brought comfort and a sense of wellness. She accompanied both family and friends during their healthcare crises with comfort, encouragement and medical expertise. Christine was fully present to everyone she met. Nobody left a visit with her without feeling seen, heard, special and loved.

In her final weeks in the hospital, Christine continued to reach out to friends through emails and texts. She

**See "Riley" on Page 4**

# Bishop Brennan to Celebrate Mass, Lead Rosary Honoring the Legacy of Martin Luther King, Jr.

**WHEELING**—Honoring the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Bishop Mark Brennan will celebrate a special Mass on January 18 at 12:05 p.m. at the Cathedral of St. Joseph in Wheeling. The Mass will be followed by a Rosary recitation to pray for peace and healing in our nation.

While the public is invited to attend, the Mass and Rosary service will also be livestreamed on the diocesan website ([www.dwc.org/mass](http://www.dwc.org/mass)) as well as on the diocesan Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/DioceofWheelingCharleston>) due to COVID-19 seating limitations in the cathedral.

In his homily Bishop Brennan will honor the significance of the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and address the call to Christian unity throughout the country. In a letter to the faithful just before the first anniversary of his installation as bishop of

Wheeling-Charleston, Bishop Brennan stressed the importance of opening our hearts and minds, as we work for a better society.

“People have the right and obligation to work for justice,” he said in the letter. “It is important that all of us recognize that our attitude towards people affects how we relate to them. As followers of Jesus Christ, who suffered, died, and rose from the dead for all people, regardless of race or origin, we must examine ourselves honestly about how we regard people of different races and ethnic groups. Change begins in the mind and heart; otherwise, any changes in behavior will only be superficial and likely will evaporate like the morning mist.”

Bishop Mark calls for each of us to quiet our minds for prayerful self-examination. Further, he again asks the faithful to read Open Wide Our Hearts

(<https://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/human-life-and-dignity/racism/upload/open-wide-our-hearts.pdf>), the US Bishops’ Pastoral Letter on Racism. The writing is not just words on

paper, but direction for us to be empathetic and informed about racism in a broad context that includes immigrants and Native Americans, as well as African Americans.

## Young ...

**Cont’d from Page 3**

took on priestly ministry in the surrounding areas as much as he was able, especially where his fluency in Spanish served Latino assemblies. In 2012 he made his move to our Provincial motherhouse, St. Augustine Friary in Pittsburgh, PA, to attend to his increasing medical concerns. The surrender of his car keys was a particularly difficult loss for him as his independence and his spontaneous visits to family and

friends were curtailed. From November, 2019, until his death, he had been ably and lovingly cared for by the staff of Vincentian Home in McCandless Township north of Pittsburgh.

Mass of Christian Burial was December 22, 2020 at Saint Augustine Church in Pittsburgh. Interment followed in the friars’ plot of St. Augustine Cemetery, Shaler Township/Millvale Pa. Donations in memory of Father Dismas may be made online to the Capuchin Friars, 220 37th Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15201.

## Riley ...

**Cont’d from Page 3**

connected with and prayed for others who were having medical procedures or other life issues. To the end, Christine was thinking of others, reaching out to offer her loving heart and prayerful support to all who might need it. The most frequently-used tributes to Christine on social media since her death include this one: “She was a beautiful soul.” She was, indeed. May the freely-offered love of this beautiful

soul continue to radiate among us. May we continue to offer it to the world for the sake of the mission, just as she did. And may her beautiful soul rest in peace.

Due to the current pandemic, Sr. Christine’s funeral liturgy will be celebrated at a later date when we can more safely gather. Memorial contributions to the Congregation of St. Joseph can be sent to 137 Mount St. Joseph Road, Wheeling, WV 26003. Arrangement are being made through Altmeyer Funeral Home in Wheeling.

*Is our  
Lord  
calling  
you?*



You may find the answer at the

## Men’s Priestly Discernment Retreat

Saturday, March 20

St. John XXIII Pastoral Center  
Charleston, WV

For college-age young men  
and older

*Presented by the Vocation Office  
Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston*

Do you desire a life of sacrifice and faithful service to God and His People? Do you desire to give yourself completely to God in a life of consecration and commitment to building up the kingdom of God here in West Virginia? Perhaps the Lord is calling you to be a Priest of Jesus Christ in the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston!

The annual diocesan Men’s Priestly Discernment Retreat will be held on Saturday, March 20 at the Pope St. John XXIII Pastoral Center (100 Hodges Rd, Charleston, WV 25314) from 10AM – 5PM. This event is open to men 18 years and older who are simply open to reflecting on God’s will for them in their lives. The day will consist of Holy Mass, prayer, reflections on the priesthood, and the opportunity for the Sacrament of Confession.

**For any men interested in attending, email Rick Teachout at [rteachout@dwc.org](mailto:rteachout@dwc.org) or call (304) 233-0880, ext. 442.**

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# Popes Francis, Benedict Receive Their First Doses of COVID-19 Vaccine

**By Carol Glatz, Catholic News Service**

**VATICAN CITY (CNS)** — Both Pope Francis and retired Pope Benedict XVI have received the first dose of the vaccine against COVID-19 after the Vatican started vaccinating its employees and residents Jan. 13.

Matteo Bruni, director of the Vatican Press Office, confirmed the news Jan. 14.

While it was reported widely that Pope Francis received the vaccine Jan. 13, the retired pope's secretary, Archbishop Georg Ganswein, told Vatican News that Pope Benedict received his shot the morning of Jan. 14. The archbishop had told the German Catholic news agency KNA Jan. 11 that the 93-year-old pope, who lives in a converted monastery in the Vatican Gardens, and his entire household staff wanted to be vaccinated as soon as the vaccine was available in Vatican City State.

He told Vatican News that the retired pope has been following the news "on television, and he shares our concerns about the pandemic, about what is hap-

pening in the world, about the many people who have lost their life because of the virus."

"There have been people he knows who have died because of COVID-19," he added.

Archbishop Ganswein said the retired pope is still very sharp mentally but that his voice and physical strength have weakened. "He is very frail and only can walk a little with a walker."

He rests more, "but we still go out every afternoon, despite the cold, in the Vatican Gardens," he added.

The Vatican's vaccination program was voluntary. The Vatican health service was giving priority to its health care workers, security personnel, employees who deal with the public and older residents, employees and retirees.

In early December, Dr. Andrea Arcangeli, director of the Vatican health service, said they would begin with the Pfizer vaccine, which was developed in conjunction with BioNTech.

Pope Francis had said in a television interview broadcast Jan. 10 that he too would be vaccinated

against the coronavirus as soon as it was available.

He said that he believed that from an ethical point of view, everyone should take the vaccine because those who did not would not only put their own lives at risk, but also the lives of others.

In a press release Jan. 2, the Vatican's health services department said it purchased an "ultra-low temperature refrigerator" for storing the vaccines and said it expected to receive enough doses to cover "the needs of the Holy See and Vatican City State."

The Vatican reported its first known case of infection in early March, and since then there have been another 25 reported cases — including 11 Swiss guards in October.

Pope Francis' personal doctor died Jan. 9 of complications caused by COVID-19. Fabrizio Soccorsi, 78, had been admitted to Rome's Gemelli hospital Dec. 26 because of cancer, according to the Italian Catholic agency SIR, Jan. 9. However, he died because of "pulmonary complications" caused by COVID-19, the agency said, without providing further details.

## In Message for World Sick Day, Pope Calls for Health Care for All

**By Cindy Wooden, Catholic News Service**

**VATICAN CITY (CNS)** — Praising those who help the sick and praying for those who are sick, Pope Francis called on Christians to practice what they preach, including by guaranteeing equal access to health care for all people.

"The current pandemic has exacerbated inequalities in our health care systems and exposed inefficiencies in the care of the sick," the pope wrote in his message for the 2021 World Day of the Sick, which the Catholic Church marks Feb. 11, the feast of Our Lady of Lourdes. The COVID-19 pandemic has made it obvious to everyone that "elderly, weak

and vulnerable people are not always granted access to care," at least not in an equitable way, he said. "This is the result of political decisions, resource management and a greater or lesser commitment on the part of those holding positions of responsibility."

"Investing resources in the care and assistance of the sick is a priority linked to the fundamental principle that health is a primary common good," Pope Francis wrote in his message, which was released by the Vatican Jan. 12.

The papal message, using Jesus' denunciation of hypocrisy in Matthew 23:1-12, insisted that real faith leads to real care for all who suffer from

illness, poverty or injustice.

"When our faith is reduced to empty words, unconcerned with the lives and needs of others, the creed we profess proves inconsistent with the life we lead," the pope wrote. "The danger is real."

When another person is suffering, he said, Jesus "asks us to stop and listen, to establish a direct and personal relationship with others, to feel empathy and compassion, and to let their suffering become our own as we seek to serve them."

Being sick makes one realize his or her "own vulnerability and innate need of others," the pope said. "It makes us feel all the more clearly that we are creatures dependent on God."

"When we are ill," he continued, "fear and even bewilderment can grip our minds and hearts; we find ourselves powerless, since our health does not depend on our abilities."

For many people, the pope said, "sickness raises the question of life's meaning," something Christians must "bring before God in faith. In seeking a new and deeper direction in

our lives, we may not find an immediate answer. Nor are our relatives and friends always able to help us in this demanding quest." Like Job in the Bible, people must stick with their prayers, crying out to God for help, he said. In the end, God "confirms that Job's suffering is not a punishment or a state of separation from God, much less a sign of God's indifference," he said. Job, "wounded and healed," confesses his faith in the Lord.

Pope Francis praised the "silent multitude of men and women," who, as the pandemic continues, do not look away, but help their patients or their neighbors.

"Such closeness is a precious balm that provides support and consolation to the sick in their suffering," he said. "As Christians, we experience that closeness as a sign of the love of Jesus Christ, the Good Samaritan, who draws near with compassion to every man and woman wounded by sin."

Jesus' commandment to love one another also applies to a Christian's relationship

with a person who is sick, the pope said. "A society is all the more human to the degree that it cares effectively for its most frail and suffering members, in a spirit of fraternal love."

"Let us strive to achieve this goal, so that no one will feel alone, excluded or abandoned," he said, praying that "Mary, Mother of Mercy and Health of the Infirm," would watch over the sick, health care workers and all those who help others.

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# For Ash Wednesday, Vatican Asks Priests to ‘Sprinkle’ Ashes on Heads

By **Catholic News Service**

**VATICAN CITY (CNS)** — The Vatican Congregation for Divine Worship and the Sacraments asked priests to take special anti-COVID-19 precautions this year when distributing ashes on Ash Wednesday, Feb. 17, including sprinkling ashes on the top of people’s heads rather than using them to make a cross on people’s foreheads.

The congregation’s note on the “distribution of ashes in time of pandemic” was published on the congregation’s website Jan. 12 and directs priests to say “the prayer for blessing the ashes” and then sprinkle “the ashes with holy water, without saying anything.”

“Then he addresses all those present and only once says the formula as it appears in the Roman Missal, applying it to all in general: ‘Repent and believe in the Gospel’ or ‘Remember that you are dust and to dust you shall return.’”

“The priest then cleanses his hands, puts on a face mask and dis-

tributes the ashes to those who come to him or, if appropriate, he goes to those who are standing in their places,” it said. “The priest takes the ashes and sprinkles them on the head of each one without saying anything.”

The usual practice would be to repeat the formula — “Repent and believe in the Gospel” or “Remember that you are dust and to dust you shall return” — to each person as the ashes are sprinkled on the top of their head or rubbed onto their forehead.

Sprinkling ashes on the top of people’s heads, rather than marking foreheads with ashes, is the customary practice at the Vatican and in Italy. Given the spread of the coronavirus, the practice has the advantage of not requiring the priest to touch multiple people.

The Latin, Italian, French, German, Spanish and Portuguese versions of the note also specify that the mask should cover the priests’ “nose and mouth.”



CNS Photo/Eloisa Lopez, Reuters

Worshippers wearing protective masks receive ashes during Ash Wednesday Mass at the National Shrine of Our Mother of Perpetual Help in Manila, Philippines, Feb. 26, 2020, during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Vatican Congregation for Divine Worship and the Sacraments has issued a note on how priests can distribute ashes on Ash Wednesday while taking precautions to avoid spreading COVID-19.

## Pope Amends Canon Law So Women Can Be Installed as Lectors, Acolytes

By **Cindy Wooden, Catholic News Service**

**VATICAN CITY (CNS)** — Recognizing “the gifts of each baptized person” — women and men — Pope Francis ordered a change to canon law and liturgical norms so that women could be formally installed as lectors and acolytes.

“A consolidated practice in the Latin church has confirmed, in fact, that such lay ministries, being based on the sacrament of baptism, can be entrusted to all the faithful who are suitable, whether male or female,” the pope wrote in his order changing canon law.

The document, issued “*motu proprio*” (on his own accord), was published by the Vatican Jan. 11. It changes the wording of Canon 230, paragraph 1.

The canon used to say, “Lay men who possess the age and qualifications established by decree of the conference of bishops can be admitted on a stable basis through the prescribed liturgical rite to the ministries of lector and acolyte.”

The updated canon will say, “Laity who possess the age and qualifications established by decree of the conference of bishops can be admitted on a stable basis through the prescribed liturgical rite to the ministries of lector and acolyte.”

“The decision to confer also on women these offices, which involve stability, public recognition and a mandate from the bishop, will make the participation of all in the work of evangelization more effective in the church,” the pope said in a letter to Cardinal Luis Ladaria, prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.

In most dioceses around the world — and at the Vatican as well — women and girls have been lectors

at Mass and have served at the altar for decades. That service was possible, not as a formally instituted ministry, but under the terms of Canon 230, paragraph 2, which allowed for women or men to carry out the functions “by temporary designation.”

In his letter to Cardinal Ladaria, published with the document changing canon law, the pope said that since the Second Vatican Council the church has made “a clearer distinction between the attributes of what today are called ‘nonordained (or lay) ministries’ and ‘ordained ministries,’” such as deacon, priest and bishop.

Those distinctions, he said, make it “possible to dissolve the reservation of the former to men alone.”

Pope Francis repeated St. John Paul II’s teaching that the Catholic Church “in no way has the faculty to confer priestly ordination on women” since Jesus chose only men as his apostles.

But with “nonordained ministries it is possible, and today it seems opportune, to overcome this reservation” of allowing only men to be formally and permanently instituted as lectors and acolytes.

The pope’s letter also said the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments would oversee the implementation of the change and would need to modify parts of the Roman Missal and the rite instituting lectors and acolytes.

The “General Instruction of the Roman Missal” says: “The acolyte is instituted for service at the altar and to assist the priest and deacon. It is his place principally to prepare the altar and the sacred vessels and, if necessary, to distribute the Eucharist to the faithful as an extraordinary minister.”

“The lector is instituted to proclaim the readings

from sacred Scripture, with the exception of the Gospel. He may also announce the intentions for the universal prayer and, in the absence of a psalmist, recite the Psalm between the readings,” the instruction says.

The instruction also says that in the absence of persons formally instituted for those roles, any qualified lay person may be assigned those roles.

Pope Francis’ document and his letter to Cardinal Ladaria frame the question in the context of the gifts and talents given by the Holy Spirit “through the sacraments of baptism, confirmation and the Eucharist” to all members of the church so that they can contribute “to the building up of the church and to the proclamation of the Gospel to every creature.”

And, he said, quoting his 2020 apostolic exhortation, “Querida Amazonia,” a formal, public installation of women in those ministries “would also allow women to have a real and effective impact on the organization, the most important decisions and the direction of communities, while continuing to do so in a way that reflects their womanhood.”

“The priesthood of the baptized and service to the community represent the two pillars on which the institution of ministries is based,” the pope said.

The change, he said, recognizes the service already carried out by many women, but will also emphasize for men preparing for priesthood — who also are formally instituted as lectors and acolytes — that those ministries “are rooted in the sacrament of baptism and confirmation” that they all share and that the ordained priesthood and the priesthood of the baptized always should work together for the good of the entire church community.

# Seminarians Happily Return to Mercer County

*Deacon Phillip Szabo and John Soplinski Visit Sacred Heart Parishes, Where Deep Friendships Were Made during Their Summer Assignments*

**By Colleen Rowan**

It is always a great joy for Deacon Phillip Szabo to return to a parish where he served for a summer assignment.

"It is like a big family reunion because the people that seminarians meet during their summer assignments truly become a part of our spiritual family," he said. "They certainly do not disappear from our life after the assignment has ended. Rather, they continue to support us in many ways, most of all by their prayers. Therefore, it always fills me with great joy to return and see how God has been working in the life of the parish, and it also gives me a chance to share what God has been doing in my life. Both the people of the parish and I are always spiritually uplifted by visits like this."

This was Deacon Szabo's last Christmas break, and he wanted to use the time to visit some of the

parishes that have supported him spiritually and financially during his time as a seminarian. The week-end of Jan. 9-10 was dedicated to Sacred Heart parishes in Bluefield and Princeton, where he served his summer assignment in 2018. Joining him was fellow seminarian John Soplinski who served there this past summer. During their visit, they served at Masses celebrated by the pastor of the parishes, Father Sebastian Devasya. Deacon Szabo had the honor of proclaiming the Gospel and preaching.

"The people here are friendly, proud of their parish, and giving of their time and talent," Soplinski said. "They are encouraging of all the seminarians and are praying for us constantly. Sacred Heart Parish Bluefield and Sacred Heart Parish Princeton take living the Gospel of Jesus Christ seriously, and they are a beacon of light in these communities."

Their visit to the parishes was a little more quiet than usual because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Instead of having a formal gathering, they spoke with parishioners individually as they left the sanctuary and exited the church building.

"This actually allowed me to have more personal conversations with people than I would have had otherwise," Deacon Szabo said. "However, many of the people made it clear that they were looking forward to a day when we could all gather together for a more grand celebration."

Deacon Szabo has many great memories of his time in Bluefield and Princeton. One of his fondest memories, he said, was of working with the young people. He recalled the parishes hosting a "Girls Night" and "Guys Night" one week that gave the youth a chance to reflect on God's love for them and some of the challenges that everyone faces starting around the high school years. Boys and girls were separated and ministered to their particular needs, he said, and the gatherings were a blessing to both the youth and the adults who served.

"For example, after these events, one of the parishioners wanted to continue this work and decided to volunteer her time as a youth leader," he said. "When I heard about this, I was both humbled and filled with joy to see what



Courtesy Photo

Deacon Phillip Szabo (center) and seminarian John Soplinski (left) are pictured with Father Sebastian Devasya at Sacred Heart Parish in Bluefield during their visit to the parish and Sacred Heart Parish in Princeton Jan. 9-10.

God was doing in the community. This helped me to see just one of the ways that God can work through a priest to bless his parishioners."

At the Masses, Father Devasya said that many Bluefield and Princeton parishioners came out to greet Deacon Szabo and Soplinski.

"Our people were very appreciative that both made the trip to Southern West Virginia, especially during this time of the COVID-19 pandemic," he said.

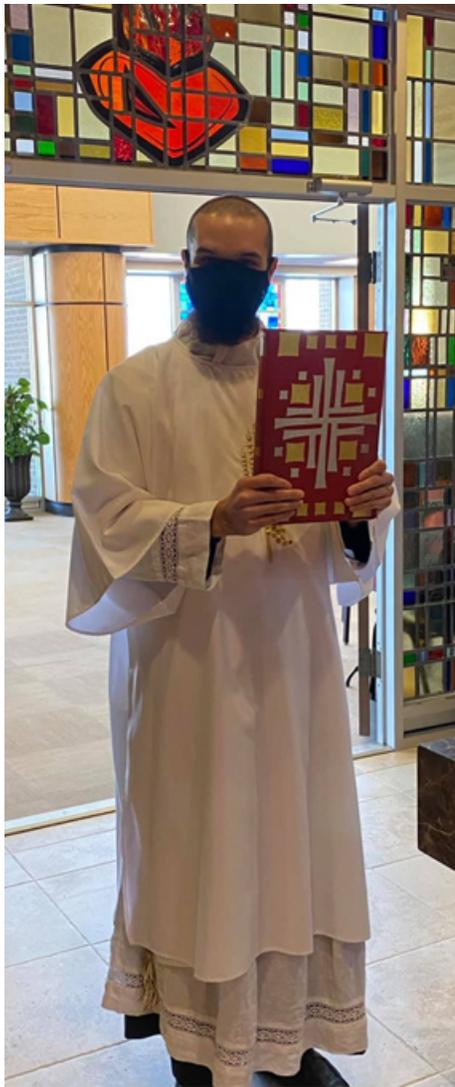
Father Devasya fondly recalled Deacon Szabo and Soplinski's time experiencing parish life and ministry in both cities. He remembered Deacon Szabo being helpful and

enthusiastic during his stay.

"Our people are very fond of him and for many, it was the first time seeing Deacon Phillip since his ordination to the Diaconate," Father Devasya said. "Deacon Phillip preached at Masses in both parishes. He delivered a powerful and engaging homily on Baptism of the Lord. Deacon Phillip is very devout. His ministry will be a beautiful blessing to the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston."

Soplinski's assignment at the parishes fell in the middle of the coronavirus pandemic, but that did not deter him from engaging the community.

**See "Return" on Page 8**



Courtesy Photo

Deacon Phillip Szabo is pictured at Sacred Heart Parish in Princeton for a visit there and to Sacred Heart Parish in Bluefield Jan. 9-10.

## Return ...

**Cont'd from Page 7**

It was an unusual time for all, Father Devasya said, but Soplinski made the very best of his time there.

"He assisted me in preparing for Mass. He faithfully worked our food pantry serving those in need," Father Devasya said. "He observed the office staff learning in inner working of administration. He also participated in a prayer group and led our Anchor prayer ministry which he is still an active member of today. Seminarian John is a very spiritual and prayerful man and our people were very pleased to see him return."

Soplinski said that Father Devasya has been a mentor to both Deacon Szabo and himself during their time in seminary.

"We value his guidance and enjoy the hospitality he and the parish community provide us," he said.

For Soplinski, the visit also afforded him the opportunity to, in a sense, finish his summer assignment as he had to leave a week earlier than planned because of the pandemic. During the visit, he returned to work at the food pantry one more time and to assist with the taking down of Christmas decorations.

"It is so rewarding for our parishioners to see both men grow and progress in their journey to the priesthood," Father Devasya said. "We all are looking forward to Deacon Phillip's ordination to the priesthood this summer."

"While they were with us, we



Courtesy Photo  
**Seminarian John Soplinski is pictured at Sacred Heart Parish in Princeton for a visit there and to Sacred Heart Parish in Bluefield Jan. 9-10. Also pictured is Father Sebastian Devasya, pastor of the parishes.**

prayed for more vocations to the priesthood and to Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston," Father Devasya continued. "We offered up all the seminarians as they continue on the path to the priesthood."

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# Eastern Panhandle Catholics Going the Extra Mile for Neighbors in Need

By Colleen Rowan

Catholic faithful of the Eastern Panhandle are going the extra mile to help their neighbors who are in need at this time. Clothing for people suffering financially, food for the hungry, and aid for the area's homeless are at the forefront of their efforts.

St. James the Greater Church in Charles Town will have a Clothing Giveaway, and announced a new date and new times for the event. The new date is Jan. 23 from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

"Many changes have been made so that we can still have this needed event in accordance with state and diocesan protocols," parish officials posted on the parish Facebook page. "There will not be a line inside the building. There will be signs to direct you so that you can wait in your car until it's your turn to come into the social hall. Please follow the directions of our vol-

unteers as we want to give everyone a chance to benefit from the giveaway."

The parish also asks participants to bring their own bags. There will not be extras this year.

Details of the giveaway are being provided to area school counselors and will be available on the day of the event.

Meanwhile, the eighth-grade class at St. Joseph School in Martinsburg has just wrapped up an endeavor to support Faith Feeding Freedom, a nonprofit organization that feeds and clothes the homeless and hungry every Friday outside the main branch of the Martinsburg-Berkeley County Library.

The class collected new and gently used blankets as well as hand warmers for distribution to those in need along with other basic survival items the organization provides. Donated items were to be dropped off at the school by Jan. 15.

The provisions will then be delivered to Faith Feeding Freedom.

"Thank you for your support of our community!" school officials posted on St. Joseph's Facebook page.

Neighboring St. Leo Church in Inwood announced that the parish's food pantry will be having a food distribution on Jan. 23. The event will be held from 10 a.m. until noon or while supplies last.

"This is on a first come, first serve basis," parish officials said.

Patrons are asked to drive up to the Fellowship Hall entrance and remain in their vehicles. Volunteers will then come to individual cars to help.

"Please wear a mask when a volunteer approaches your vehicle," parish officials said.

The distribution will provide dried and canned food goods.

## Diocesan Tuition Assistance Process Open for 2021-2022 School Year

**WEST VIRGINIA**—For the 30th consecutive year, the Diocesan Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) is striving to keep Catholic school education affordable for Catholic families who desire it for their children but who may need some financial assistance to make that dream a reality. Thanks to the ongoing and genuine commitment of Bishop Mark Brennan to the Catholic schools in the diocese, funds have, once again, been allocated for distribution to Catholic families in need of financial assistance.

Applying for TAP through FACTS is easy and affordable. You are encouraged to apply if your child is already enrolled or has been accepted by one of the Catholic schools in the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston for the 2021-2022 school year.

### Who is eligible?

Any Catholic student accepted for the 2021-2022 school year in any Diocesan Catholic school (PK thru grade 12) and who belongs to a parish included on the drop-down list as part of the on-line application is eligible. Determinations are based upon a family's degree of need relative to all other applicants.

### How do I apply?

Applications are made on-line. Go to [www.factsmgt.com](http://www.factsmgt.com), click on "Grant & Aid Assessment" and log in. If you do not have Internet access, contact your school office for assistance.

### Cost?

The application fee is \$35. The Diocese will pay \$17.50 and families pay the other \$17.50.

### Grants:

Diocesan grants for Catholic families who have completed their applications and show financial need will receive up to 50% of the child's tuition.

### Phase I Deadline-April 30, 2021

In order to receive notification in late May, applications (including all required documentation and payment of the fee) are to be received by FACTS by April 30, 2021. Phase I is intended for families with children currently enrolled or already accepted for the 2021-2022 school year in any Catholic school in the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston.

### Phase II Deadline-August 14, 2021

In order to receive notification in early September, all applications for 2021-2022 (including all

required documentation and payment of the fee) MUST be RECEIVED by FACTS no later than August 14, 2021. This is a firm deadline. Phase II is intended for families new to the school or who have had a life-changing event (i.e. birth, death, loss of job, major illness). If an application was submitted during Phase I, please contact the school. Please do NOT submit a second application.

### Note 1:

No assistance will be available from the Diocese or from any school unless: an application is completed in full (ALL questions answered) and submitted all required documentation is provided, AND the family portion (\$17.50) of the application fee is paid by the deadline.

### Note 2:

ONLY ONE APPLICATION PER FAMILY should be submitted per school year. If you made an error or had a life event change, please do NOT submit a second application. Contact your principal and your application can be updated by FACTS.

### Questions?

If you have questions, please contact the principal of your school.

## St. Joseph School in Martinsburg Announces Open Enrollment Dates

**MARTINSBURG**—Open enrollment has been announced for St. Joseph School in Martinsburg. For families whose children do not already attend, they can apply Monday, March 1, for the 2021-22 school year.

Families of current SJS students may start the re-enrollment process beginning Monday, Feb. 1.

The only Catholic school in the Eastern Panhandle, St. Joseph School serves children ages 2 through eighth grade. Math, language arts, science, social studies and religion are core subjects, and students attend Mass weekly. When the pandemic clears, academic competitions, engaging extracurriculars, projects, hands-on learning and field trips are expected to resume.

To apply or re-enroll, go to [sjsww.org](http://sjsww.org). For more information about the school or questions, contact Meg Partington by sending e-mail to [mpartington@sjsww.org](mailto:mpartington@sjsww.org) or call (304) 267-6447.

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# St. Joseph Retreat Center Offering Virtual Year-long '2020 Vision Series'

**WHEELING**—"The dawning of a new year brings with it new hopes, dreams, and hopes for the future while allowing us to reflect on the challenges and blessings of the past," officials at the St. Joseph Retreat Center in Wheeling said. "The transition from 2020 to 2021 maybe the best example of this reality."

Though many are eager to put 2020 behind them, officials said, there are lessons to be learned from this past year in all that has been experienced to move forward into the future.

"Hindsight is 2020," officials said.

With this in mind, the St. Joseph Retreat Center in Wheeling is offering the year-long "2020 Vision Series." This virtual event will be held at 7 p.m. every fourth Monday of the month from January to December. Each month will cover a different topic featuring a different speaker.

The following are the monthly topics: Hindsight is 2020...Don't Dwell on Past Mistakes—Jan. 25; Sanitize your Soul...the Value of Forgiveness—Feb. 22; Quarantining...the Antithesis of Service—March 22; Vaccinate Against Mediocrity—April 26; Testing Positive in a Negative World—May 24; Recognizing the Symptoms of Strong Faith...the Rapid Test—June 28; Don't Isolate—Spread your Faith—July 26; Who is Essential in Your Life?—Aug. 23; Socially Distant from Sin...How to Avoid Temptation—Sept. 27; The World Needs a Pandemic of Prayer—Oct. 25; Unmask your Real Self—Nov. 22; The Stimulus Toward Salvation—Dec. 27.

The series was originated by Shirley Carter. Space is limited. The cost is \$120 for the entire series or \$15 per session.

To reserve a spot or for more information, contact Anna Marie Troiani by e-mail to [atroiani@csjoseph.org](mailto:atroiani@csjoseph.org).

## Employment Opportunity Assistant Director of the Office of Evangelization & Catechesis

The Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston has an opening for Assistant Director of the Office of Evangelization & Catechesis. This is a full time position.

This person will assist the Director in providing leadership for the ongoing development and success of Parish programs and services in the ministerial areas of Evangelization & Catechesis. This person will develop programs and processes that support and empower parishes to manifest a vision of life long formation. Areas of focus are ministries of Evangelization, Catechesis, Laity, Marriage, Family Life Youth and Pro Life activities. Person will be a resource to Parish personnel in the various areas of ministries in order to grow and foster those ministries at the Parish level.

Qualified persons will have a Bachelor's Degree in Theology, Religious Education or related fields of study. Preference given to persons holding a Master's Degree. Three (3) or more years of experience in Catechetical Formation is preferred. Person must be a practicing active Catholic who adheres to the teachings and Traditions of the Catholic Church. Leadership abilities as well as organizational skills are essential to succeed in the position. Must be able to work flexible schedules at time as well as work evenings and weekends when position requires.

Interested persons should respond with Resume and 3 letters of reference to:

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# From Homeless to Housed

**By Katie Hinerman Klug, Catholic Charities West Virginia Marketing Communications Specialist**

Most of us can relate with the desire for a home-cooked meal. For Reggie Smith, he desired to cook that meal himself in his own kitchen.

“I just want a home-cooked meal... to cook a meal for myself,” said Reggie.

Reggie and Kelly had both lost their jobs during the coronavirus pandemic. They were without housing when their daughter Kaliyah was born in the summer of 2020.

“Having a baby with all of this going on, it was really tough,” said Reggie. “We were just trying to stay as safe as possible.”

The family chose to stay in a hotel where they could minimize their newborn baby’s exposure to the virus, rather than staying at a homeless shelter where they would share a space with countless others.

The Catholic Charities West Virginia (CCWVa) team was able to work with Reggie through its stabilization program, which helps individuals or families who are in or near a financial crisis. Through this program, trained staff meet with individuals to identify action steps and available community resources, while also providing financial assistance when needed

and appropriate.

“We were able to connect Reggie with a realtor who could find a rental for them that met their needs and was in their price range,” said Kat Hagedorn, CCWVa Case Manager.

CCWVa assisted with the security deposit and first month’s rent, as well as kitchen tools, blankets and other household supplies.

“I’m just so thankful that they [CCWVa] opened the door for us with a deposit,” said Reggie. “I thank God for them. They gave me hope to keep pushing.”

Reggie, Kelly and Kaliyah are thriving in their new home, and Kelly has been able to return to work while Reggie cares for their daughter during the day.

To learn more about Catholic Charities West Virginia, visit [www.CatholicCharitiesWV.org](http://www.CatholicCharitiesWV.org).

The Mission of Catholic Charities West Virginia: Guided by God’s love, Catholic Charities collaborates with community partners, parishes and families to provide caring and compassionate services to people in need and work toward lasting and meaningful change.

**Courtesy Photo**  
**Reggie Smith and his family are working toward their goals in their home with help from Catholic Charities West Virginia.**



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## Para Miércoles de Ceniza, el Vaticano pide a sacerdotes medidas de distanciamiento

Por **Catholic News Service**

**CIUDAD DEL VATICANO (CNS)** -- La Congregación del Vaticano para el Culto Divino y la Disciplina de los Sacramentos pidió a los sacerdotes que tomen precauciones especiales contra el COVID-19 este año al distribuir cenizas el Miércoles de Ceniza, el 17 de febrero, incluso rociar cenizas sobre la cabeza de las personas en vez de hacer una cruz en la frente de las personas.

La nota de la congregación sobre la "distribución de cenizas en tiempos de pandemia" se publicó en el sitio web de la congregación el 12 de enero y ordena a los sacerdotes que "pronunciada la oración de bendición de las cenizas y después de asperjarlas, sin decir nada, con el agua bendita, el sacerdote se dirigirá a los presentes, diciendo una sola vez y para todos los fieles, la fórmula del Misal Romano: 'Convertíos y creed en el Evangelio', o bien: 'Acuérdate de que eres polvo y al polvo volverás'".

"El sacerdote luego se limpia las manos, se pone la mascarilla y distribuye las cenizas a quienes se acercan a él o, si corresponde, se dirige a quienes están parados en sus lugares", dijo. "El sacerdote toma las cenizas y las esparce sobre la cabeza de cada uno sin decir nada".

La práctica habitual sería repetir la fórmula - "Arrepiéntete y cree en el Evangelio" o "Recuerda que eres polvo y al polvo volverás" - a cada persona mientras las cenizas se esparcen en la parte superior de su cabeza o se frotan sobre su frente.

Rociar cenizas en la parte superior de la cabeza de las personas, en lugar de marcar la frente con cenizas, es la práctica habitual en el Vaticano y en Italia. Dada la propagación del coronavirus, la práctica tiene la ventaja de no requerir que el sacerdote toque a varias personas.

Las versiones en latín, italiano, francés, alemán, español y portugués de la nota también especifican que la máscara debe cubrir la "nariz y la boca" de los sacerdotes.

## Papa enmienda ley canónica para que mujeres puedan ser lectores, acólitas

Por **Cindy Wooden, Catholic News Service**

**CIUDAD DEL VATICANO (CNS)**—Reconociendo "los dones de cada persona bautizada" --mujeres y hombres-- el papa Francisco ordenó un cambio en el derecho canónico y las normas litúrgicas para que mujeres puedan ser formalmente instituidas como lectoras y acólitas (monaguillas).

"Una práctica consolidada en la iglesia latina ha confirmado, de hecho, que tales ministerios laicos, al estar basados en el sacramento del bautismo, pueden ser confiados a todos los fieles que sean aptos, ya sean hombres o mujeres", escribió el papa en su orden de cambio del derecho canónico.

El documento, emitido por "motu proprio" (por decisión propia), fue publicado por el Vaticano el 11 de enero. El mismo cambia la redacción del canon 230, párrafo 1.

El canon decía: "los hombres laicos de una edad y dones determinados por decreto de la conferencia episcopal podrán ser empleados permanentemente, mediante el rito litúrgico establecido, en los ministerios de lectores y acólitos".

El canon actualizado dirá: "los laicos de una edad y unos dones determinados por decreto de la conferencia episcopal podrán ser empleados permanentemente, mediante el rito litúrgico establecido, en los ministerios de lectores y acólitos".

"La decisión de conferir también a las mujeres estos cargos, que implican estabilidad, reconocimiento público y un mandato del obispo, hará que la participación de todos en la labor de evangelización sea más eficaz en la iglesia", dijo el papa en una carta al cardenal Luis Ladaria, prefecto de la Congregación para la Doctrina de la Fe.

En la mayoría de las diócesis del mundo --y también en el Vaticano-- las mujeres y las niñas han sido lectoras en la misa y han servido en el altar durante décadas. Ese servicio fue posible, no como un ministerio formalmente instituido, sino bajo los términos del canon 230, párrafo 2, que permitía a las mujeres u hombres llevar a cabo las funciones "por designación temporal".

En su carta al cardenal Ladaria, publicada con el documento que cambia el derecho canónico, el papa dijo que desde el Concilio Vaticano II la iglesia ha hecho "una distinción más clara entre los atributos de lo que hoy se llaman ministerios no ordenados (o laicos) y los ministerios ordenados", tales como diácono, sacerdote y obispo.

Esas distinciones, dijo, hacen "posible eliminar que los primeros sean reservados solo a los hombres".

El papa Francisco repitió la enseñanza de san Juan Pablo II de que la Iglesia Católica "de ninguna manera tiene la facultad de conferir la ordenación sacerdotal a

las mujeres" ya que Jesús eligió sólo a los hombres como sus apóstoles.

Pero con "los ministerios no ordenados es posible, y hoy parece oportuno, superar esa salvedad" de permitir que sólo los hombres sean formal y permanentemente instituidos como lectores y acólitos.

La carta del papa también explicó que la Congregación para el Culto Divino y la Disciplina de los Sacramentos, supervisaría la implementación del cambio y necesitaría modificar partes del Misal Romano y del rito para instituir lectores y acólitos.

La "instrucción general del Misal Romano" dice: "El acólito es instituido para servir en el altar y asistir al sacerdote y al diácono. Su función principalmente es preparar el altar y las copas sagradas y, si es necesario, distribuir la eucaristía a los fieles como un ministro extraordinario".

"Se instituye al lector para proclamar las lecturas de la Sagrada Escritura, con excepción del evangelio. Puede también anunciar las intenciones de la oración universal y, en ausencia del salmista, recitar el salmo entre las lecturas", dice la instrucción.

La misma también agrega que en ausencia de personas formalmente instituidas para esas funciones, a cualquier laico calificado se le pueden asignar esas funciones.

El documento del papa Francisco y su carta al cardenal Ladaria enmarcan la cuestión en el contexto de los dones y talentos otorgados por el Espíritu Santo "a través de los sacramentos del bautismo, la confirmación y la eucaristía" a todos los miembros de la iglesia para que puedan contribuir "a la edificación de la iglesia y a la proclamación del evangelio a todo ser humano".

Y, dijo --citando su exhortación apostólica "Querida Amazonia" del 2020-- que una instalación formal y pública de mujeres en esos ministerios "también le permitiría a las mujeres tener un impacto real y efectivo en la organización, las decisiones más importantes y la dirección de las comunidades, mientras continúan haciéndolo de una manera que refleje su condición de mujer".

"El sacerdocio de los bautizados y el servicio a la comunidad representan los dos pilares en los que se basa la institución de los ministerios", dijo el papa.

El cambio, dijo, reconoce el servicio que ya realizan muchas mujeres, pero también destacará para los hombres que se preparan para el sacerdocio --que también son instituidos formalmente como lectores y acólitos-- que esos ministerios "están arraigados en el sacramento del bautismo y la confirmación" que todos comparten y que el sacerdocio producto de una ordenación y el sacerdocio de los bautizados siempre deben trabajar juntos para el bien de toda la comunidad eclesial.

**Para denunciar presuntos casos de abuso sexual de niños:** La Diócesis de Wheeling-Charleston alienta a informar ante las autoridades civiles ante todo si se ha cometido un delito. También alentamos a utilizar [www.reportbishop-abuse.org](http://www.reportbishop-abuse.org) para hacer un informe sobre cualquier obispo en los EE. UU. Si tiene motivos para creer que un obispo ha cometido una conducta sexual inapropiada, comuníquese con las autoridades civiles de la jurisdicción correspondiente y visite [www.reportbishop-abuse.org](http://www.reportbishop-abuse.org).

**Para informar a las autoridades civiles:** comuníquese con la policía local; los números variarán según su ubicación. Si cree que alguien está en peligro inmediato, llame al 911. Para informar confidencialmente cualquier incidencia de sospecha de abuso o negligencia infantil, incluido el abuso sexual, comuníquese con la Oficina de Servicios de Protección Infantil de Niños y Familias de West Virginia llamando a la línea directa de abuso infantil al 800.352.6513. Puede informar anonimamente a esta línea directa si lo prefiere.

**Para informar a las autoridades diocesanas:** La diócesis alienta a informar a las autoridades civiles apropiadas, ante todo, si se ha cometido un delito. La diócesis también alienta a informar a las autoridades eclesiales apropiadas. Para reportar casos sospechosos de abuso sexual de niños por parte del personal de la Diócesis de Wheeling-Charleston a la Diócesis, comuníquese con uno de los siguientes designados al 1.888.434.6237 o 304.233.0880: Sr. Bryan Minor, ext. 263; Sr. Tim Bishop, ext. 353; o Muy Reverendo Dennis Schuelkens, Jr., V.E., ext. 270. También puede llamar a la Oficina de Ambiente Seguro de la Diócesis al

304.230.1504. También puede llamar a la línea directa de abuso sexual de la Diócesis al 833.230.5656. Los formularios de queja están disponibles en línea en [www.dwc.org](http://www.dwc.org), haga clic en "Diócesis" en la barra de menú, luego en "Oficinas", luego en "Ambiente seguro", luego "Descargar archivos y formularios". El formulario se titula "Formulario de queja para denuncias de abuso sexual de menores". El formulario se puede devolver por correo de EE. UU. A: Office of Safe Environment, Diócesis de Wheeling-Charleston, PO Box 230, Wheeling WV 26003.

**Para informar al Coordinador de Asistencia a Víctimas de la Diócesis:** llame a la Dra. Patricia Bailey al 304.242.6988.

Además de los métodos enumerados anteriormente para denunciar el abuso sexual, la Diócesis también se ha asociado con Navex Global para ofrecer la plataforma EthicsPoint para informar otras inquietudes adicionales, como sospecha de mala conducta financiera, profesional y personal de un sacerdote, diácono, religioso, o empleado laico de la Diócesis o cualquier parroquia o escuela católica en West Virginia. Se puede acceder a la plataforma EthicsPoint a través de [www.dwc.org](http://www.dwc.org), en "Renderición de cuentas", luego "Informar mala conducta" o llamando al 844.723.8381. EthicsPoint es un sistema de informes de terceros que informa a las autoridades civiles cuando corresponda y a las autoridades diocesanas, y la identidad de la persona que informa esta protegida.

Enlaces e información: Departamento de Salud y Recursos Humanos de WV: <https://www.wvdhhr.org/report.asp>. Policía Estatal de Virginia Occidental, Unidad de Crímenes contra Niños: 304-293-6400.



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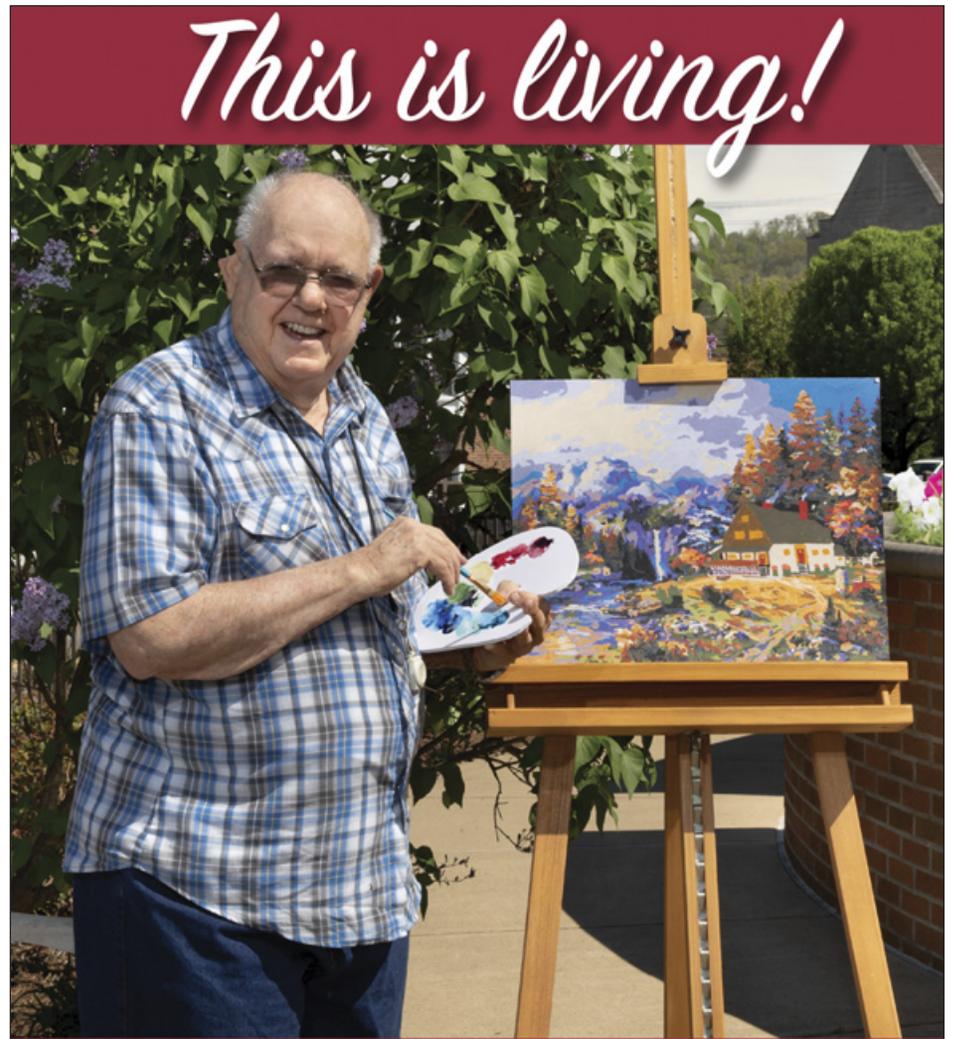
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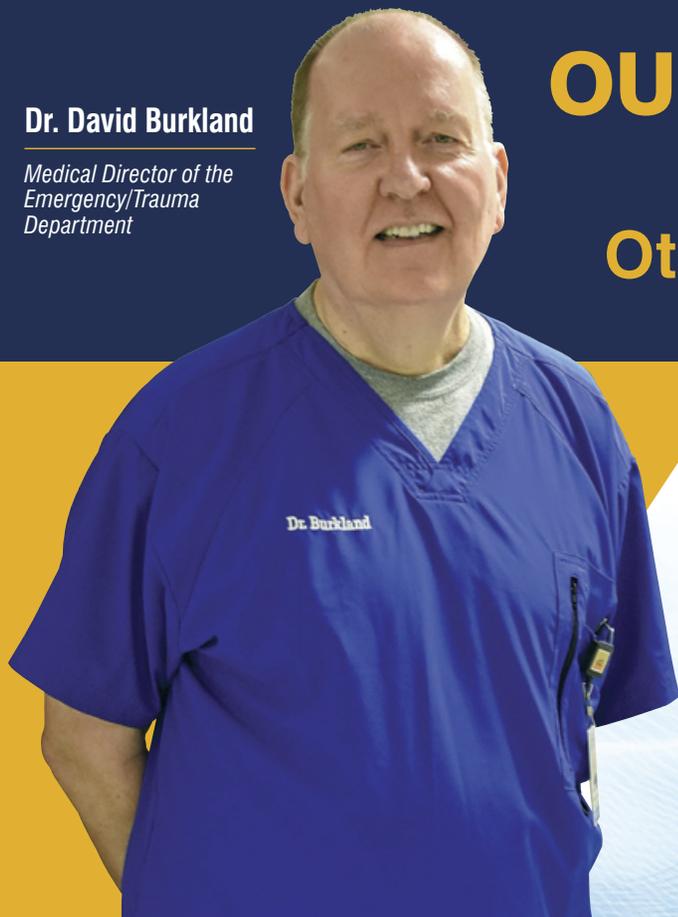


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